struum, and were of an inflammable nature. I have not met with an appearance of this kind. The distilled water, however, had a substance dissolved in sufficient quantity to yield a gradual precipitate with some reagents, such as muriate of tin and acetate of lead. The strength of the distilled water is impaired by continuing the operation too long. The acrimony of the plant is expended in a very short time at the boiling heat, and a farther continuance of the distillation brings over only water.

Since the time of Dioscorides [*Note* A.] the acrid and stimulating properties of the Ranunculi have been well known. This acrimony resides in all the species, with the exception of *R. auricomus*, which is said to be mild, and perhaps two or three others. It is so powerful that it speedily inflames or corrodes the lips and tongue, if kept in contact with them. In the nostrils it acts as a violent sternutatory, and if swallowed in considerable quantity, it brings on great pain, heat and inflammation of the stomach, and has even occasioned convulsions and death.

Before the introduction of Cantharides as a vesicatory, different species of Ranunculus were used upon the skin, as external stimulants. Their power of occasioning erosion and ulceration

appears to have been known to the ancients. Different medical writers have given accounts of their mode of operation; but the most extensive history and investigation is that of Krapf, published at Vienna, in 1766. This work, which I have not seen, is quoted in all its principal facts by Professor Murray of Göttingen in the Apparatus medicaminum. According to this author the various species, with which his experiments were made, proved capable of exciting inflammation, blistering and ulceration, when applied to the skin. A slice of the fresh root of R. bulbosus placed in contact with the inside of the finger, brought on a sense of burning in two minutes. When taken off, the skin was found without redness, and the sense of heat and itching ceased. In two hours, however, it returned again, and in ten hours a full serous blister was raised. This was followed by an ulcer of bad character and difficult to heal. He remarks that, if the application is continued after the first itching, the pain and subsequent erosion is much greater.

From the accounts given of this species, also of R. sceleratus, R. acris, and some others, it appears that the leaves, flowers, buds, or roots of these plants, if bruised and applied to the skin, excite redness and vesication. This effect is not